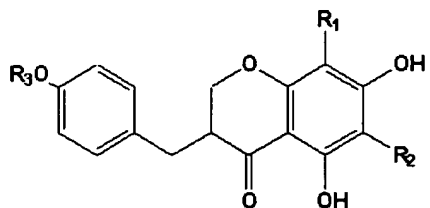


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A dendrite elongation inhibitor for melanocytes consisting of a compound represented by the following general formula (1):

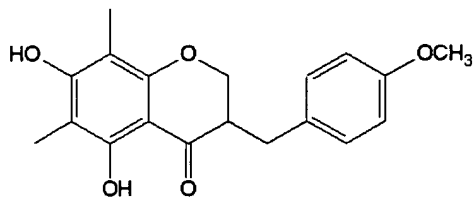


formula (1)

and/or a salt thereof,

wherein R₁, R₂, and R₃ each independently represent a C₁₋₄ alkyl group or hydrogen atom.

2. (Currently amended) The dendrite elongation inhibitor for melanocytes according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the compound represented by the general formula (1) is methylophiopogonanone B indicated by the following formula.



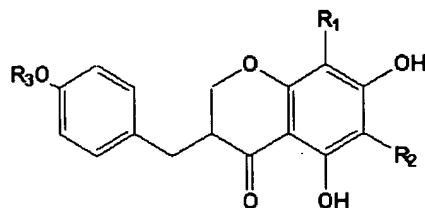
3. (Original) A skin preparation for external use for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites, comprising the dendrite elongation inhibitor for melanocytes according to claim 1 or 2 as an active ingredient.

4. (Currently amended) The skin preparation for external use for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the skin preparation for external use is used for alleviating dyschromatosis on which tyrosinase inhibitors have insufficient effect.

5. (Currently amended) The skin preparation for external use for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 3 [[or 4]], ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the skin preparation for external use is a cosmetic.

6. (New) The skin preparation for external use for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 4, wherein the skin preparation for external use is a cosmetic.

7. (New) A method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites comprising:
a step of applying a skin preparation for external use for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites comprising, as an active ingredient, a dendrite elongation inhibitor for melanocytes consisting of a compound represented by the following general formula (1):

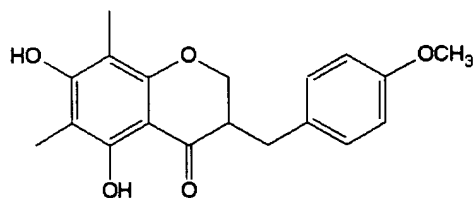


formula (1)

and/or a salt thereof,

wherein R₁, R₂, and R₃ each independently represent a C₁₋₄ alkyl group or hydrogen atom.

8. (New) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 7, wherein the compound represented by the general formula (1) is methylophiopogonanone B indicated by the following formula.



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9. (New) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the skin preparation for external use is used for alleviating dyschromatosis on which tyrosinase inhibitors have insufficient effect.

10. (New) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the skin preparation for external use is a cosmetic.

11. (New) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 9, wherein the skin preparation for external use is a cosmetic.